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**What are the drivers of rural land fragmentation in the Tasman District and what
have been the planning responses?**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Helen Frances Watson

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Abstract

Rural land use in the Tasman District of New Zealand is characterised by fragmentation of farming land, driven by a mix of historical land use patterns, global influences, and political decision-making. Colonial farmers developed subsistence farming on small allotments of mixed productivity. Pockets of highly fertile land supported the development of small-scale horticultural industries and the region's good climate and high amenity value have made it a desirable destination for urban-employed migrants seeking lifestyle opportunities.

The fragmentation of rural land occurs via subdivision, a process that is administered by the local district council, regulated by a district plan framework and land-use consent mechanisms. Analysis of Tasman District plans and policy, case law, and subdivision data, reveals a regulatory process that is failing to limit ongoing land fragmentation with increasing numbers of subdivision applications and new allotments and dwellings developed on the most productive land.

Key Words: planning, rural land fragmentation, rural subdivision, rural land use, Tasman District

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The Massey University Research Ethics Office has approved this study as a Low Risk Notification (attached as Appendix 1).

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Figures and Tables	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Fragmentation – A Review of the Literature	3
Defining the Topic	3
Land Fragmentation	6
Rural Smallholdings.....	11
Conclusion.....	14
Chapter 3: Methodology	18
Context for Methodology.....	18
Selection of Methodology	21
Data Sources	22
Quantitative Data.....	25
Conclusion.....	27
Chapter 4: The New Zealand Context	28
Economic Restructuring	28
National Land Use Changes	30
Land Productivity	32
Real Estate Figures.....	35
Conclusion.....	36
Chapter 5: The Legislative Context	37
Pre-RMA Planning	37
The Resource Management Act 1991	39
Conclusion.....	43
Chapter 6: The Tasman Context	45

History of the Tasman District.....	45
Tasman District Today	51
Conclusion.....	57
Chapter 7: Schemes and Plans.....	59
Historic Planning Schemes	59
TDC Planning	67
Conclusion.....	75
Chapter 8: Planning Policy and Case Law	77
TDC Policy Reviews	77
Case Law	81
Conclusion.....	82
Chapter 9: Quantitative Results	84
Subdivision Data	84
New Allotments	88
New Dwellings Data.....	90
Chapter 10: Discussion	92
Changes in Land Use.....	92
District Plan.....	96
Land Productivity	99
Conclusion	102
Bibliography.....	103
Cases Cited.....	111
Appendix 1: Ethics Approval.....	112
Appendix 2: Maps of Tasman District Wards	113

Figures and Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of New Zealand smallholders	12
Figure 1: Types of New Zealand smallholders	12
Table 2: National numbers of smallholdings	13
Table 3: Numbers of lifestyle farms – top ten districts in 2004	13
Table 4: Local Government Reforms – Top of the South	16
Figure 2: Tasman District showing main settlements and state highways	17
Table 5: Historic plans reviewed	24
Table 6: “Summary of responses made by farm families after 1984”	29
Figure 3: “Tasman Fruitlands” subdivisions	47
Figure 4: Farming and fruitgrowing on the Waimea Plain 1936	49
Table 7: Relative performance of Nelson Tasman industries 2009.....	52
Table 8: Farm types in Tasman 2002.....	53
Table 9: Apple statistics 2009	54
Figure 5: Median sale price of lifestyle properties.....	56
Figure 6: Lifestyle properties – annual sales	56
Figure 8: Annual subdivision applications	84
Figure 9: Decision type and year.....	85
Figure 10: Subdivision applications by zone	86
Figure 11: Subdivision applications by ward	87
Figure 12: Waimea – subdivision applications by zone.....	87
Figure 13: Subdivision – new allotment comparison	89
Figure 14: New allotments by zone and ward.....	90
Figure 15: Subdivision consents issued and new dwellings	91
Figure 16: Lifestyle property sales and subdivision applications	95